PRICE TWOPENCE. 3s. per annum post free.

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

No. 247. FEBRUARY, 1928.

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Wayside Gatherings.

Disestablishment—"A Foolish Policy."

"That Disestablishment might bring some gain to the Church few will deny, The Disendowment which would accompany Disestablishment would help to bring home to its members their responsibility for the upkeep of the church, its ministers and services . . . . But would the Church be more free? Would there not be real danger that it might lose its comprehensiveness, and grow narrow in outlook and that a dominant section would succeed in enforcing its own views. . . . . ? Its effect upon the nation and the national life would be immensely harmful. The Church of England, just because it is an Established Church, renders services to the nation which would not be rendered if it were disestablished . . . . . It stands as a perpetual reminder that England claims to be a Christian nation."

—Canon Storr.

* *

DARKness.

"The man who denies the Assertions of the Creeds may be a Bishop of the Church, but he is not a Christian."—Mr. Sidney Dark.

* *

Protestantism.

Dr. Goudge, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and an Anglo-Catholic, writing in "The Times, had some interesting, though not very edifying, things to say about Protestantism. "The word," Dr. Goudge says, "has two meanings," which he subtly differentiates. It is all a question of accent: if the accent be placed on the second syllable (Protestant) then it seems that Anglo-Catholics are Protestants. But if the accent be placed on the first syllable (**Pro**testant) then, if we understand Dr. Goudge aright, the word applies to vulgar Anti-Catholics like Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, Sir John Simon, Sir Douglas Hogg, and Sir Thomas Inskip . . . .But Dr. Goudge's argument strikes us as elaborate hair-splitting. It is about as irrelevant as old Weller's advice to his son—"Spell it with a we Samivel, spell it with a 'we.'"—The "Christian World."

* *

For the Bairns.

"Jones," said a teacher to a boy, "you were absent from school yesterday." "Yes, ma'am," said Jones, "I had to be away yesterday." "Well," said the teacher, "the school regulations require a written excuse for all absences." "Who from," asked Jones. "Oh, you may bring an excuse from either your father or your mother," the teacher replied. "Then I guess I'll have to bring one from Mother," stated Jones, "for father's an awful poor hand at making excuses."

* *

In praise of Thomas Hardy.

I take the following extract from a leading article in the "Manchester Guardian" on Thomas Hardy. "You may fail to find in him any animating and forward looking philosophy like Meredith's noble encouragement to the young man and woman of spirit to live themselves into the joint life of the human race until they can see even in their own failure or early death no more than the crushing or fading of a crocus in a natural world in which individual death may itself be only an indirect means to a richer general life. But in Hardy you have at least the contact of a most divine humaneness and purity of temper, and if he is not a rousing leader of conscious thought about life and conduct, to read him is none the less a purging of the spirit." A.W.,

New Year's Message.

From Lord Justice Andrews.

[*Owing to exacting duties consequent on serious indisposition, the following contribution was received too late for inclusion in our January number, but as the year is still in its infancy our readers will welcome a message of hope from one who is in an exceptional position to guage conditions and prospects in the year before us.*]

31st December, 1927.

On this the last day of the old year we turn instinctively in thought from the days that are gone to those that lie ahead. Memories of alternating joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, successes and failures, are fading away, and yielding place to the hope of things that are to come.

As one to whom is entrusted one of the most important duties of this or any State—the administration of justice and the maintenance of law and order, I congratulate our people of Northern Ireland upon the peaceful condition of our province, which will bear favourable comparison with the state of any country in the world.

Old party feelings and religious animosities are rapidly being superseded by broader, saner, and more patriotic conceptions, which place country before party, and find a bond of union in religious sympathy, uniting us more and more, one to another, for the worship of God and the service of man.

It is from peace that there springs that public confidence which is essential to the prosperity and well-being of a nation. Therefore it is that I look forward to the year upon which we are about to enter with firm confidence that it will add much to our material prosperity and to that far greater blessing in the social and moral welfare of our state.

JAMES ANDREWS.

Notes of the Month.

A Personal Note.

It is with very great regret we consider it a duty to record a fact which is already known to many of our readers, namely the serious illness of the Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A. His grave indisposition has necessitated the discontinuance for the time being of his strenuous labours in the interests of our church in general as well as those of the York Street Congregation in particular. Our readers will join with us in earnestly trusting that his health will be speedily restored and that medical skill will find means to overcome the malady which threatens to incapacitate his future labours.

The whole of our church connection will be greatly perturbed by the announcement that this young minister who has been instrumental in resuscitating one of our congregations into newness of life, has had his strenuous career interfered with to such an extent as to render him for a time incapable of pursuing his active ministerial career.

All who are familiar with his heroic adventure since he began his ministerial career in Belfast will greatly sympathise with him and desire for him a complete and early recovery. Much sympathy will also be extended to the York Street Congregation on account of the shadow that has been cast on their successful career by this unlooked for calamity. We learn with considerable relief that the Congregation are likely to hold together fairly well and have arranged their own supplies for a few weeks, when, no doubt, Presbytery and the Ministerial brethren will fix up a rota of supplies.

We are given to understand that the situation with regard to our friend's heath is very complicated. The alternative seems to be a serious operation, followed by at least three months abroad, which mignt give a very good hope, or to go abroad without operation for a long time which means dropping everything and might give good results, or might make matters worse. There is also another alternative, namely, some treatment at home which could be dropped and operation resorted to at any time, if thought to be the best course.

Mr. Agnew has received all kinds of letters which he cannot possibly reply to as he is not supposed to write at all. In the meantime we can only assure our friend that such assistance as can be given by his ministerial and lay friends will be freely at his disposal. We trust that means will be found to make his heavy burden as light as possible under the circumstances and that every assistance will be forthcoming to explore any and every means calculated to restore him to health and strength.

* *

Congratulations.

On the occasion of attaining his 82nd birthday, Mr. Samuel Magill, J.P., Chairman of the Larne Urban Council has received many felicitous messages from Larne fellow-townsmen and also from prominent and dis-

tinguished Ulstermen. We are glad to give further prominence to this auspicious event in the first place as we have learnt from the public press that "Mr. Magill is Larne's best known and most popular personality, who has hosts of friends all over Ulster, and who in the evening of his days commands that admiration and respect which are the just reward of an exemplary and useful life spent in the service of the community." This high praise is further enhanced when we learn that "in local government matters the town has had no more assiduous or enthusiastic administrator," seeing "he has served for 27 years on the Urban Council, is now its chairman, and has been appointed to that position for the past four successive years." That he may be long spared to the town in the interests of which he has worked for over a quarter of a century is the wish of all his friends and not the least the members of the Non-Subscribing Church of which he is an attached and devoted member. Those who have been prominently connected with him on various Church Committees have had experience of his capacity and know the value of his services. He has served our church generally long and faithfully for a great number of years. May he be long spared to encourage and to inspire others in every good word and work.

Truth Moveth On.

Sermon by Rev. C. J. STREET, M.A., LL.B.

"Your brethren that cast ye out for My name's sake said, Let the Lord be glorified! But He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed."—Isa. 66 : 5.

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(*Continued*).

It is no small triumph for Dr. Barnes to have wrung from his Archbishop in an open letter of rebuke an admission that he himself is prepared to accept the biological doctrine of evolution from an ape ancestor, and yet see no inconsistency with the articles of the Church which he serves.

For myself, as for many others, it is matter for great wonder how so bold a Bishop, and those who think with him, can satisfy their consciences by remaining in communion with a Church, whose whole history and spirit, not to speak of its creeds regularly repeated in religious worship, have been uniformly hostile to such a Liberal Faith as he professes. It is indeed an extraordinary comprehensive Church, whose extremes are diametrically opposed to each other in every respect—too comprehensive, because its creeds make both extremes indefensible. A crash is bound to come before long. However, that is their affair. Each man must stand or fall to his own Master.

But one thing is perfectly plain. It has been the Unitarian gospel, proclaimed in season and out of season, through good and ll report, with a fidelity in danger and obloquy which all lovers of truth must admire, which is responsible chiefly for all these encouraging developments of Liberal Religion. Had there been no Unitarian scholars and thinkers leading the way, no centres of Unitarian worship, often difficult indeed to maintain, these welcome changes of tone and outlook in the popular churches could never have taken place. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association has played no little part in the publication of theological treatises abreast of the times, and in helping many of these churches to live through circumstances of great difficulty.

Sometimes the cause has seemed so small and feeble that there has been temptation to close down.

But it must never be forgotten that the faithfulness of a few has often saved many, and that the very holding up of an ensign has a moral effect far beyond calculation. The faith that Unitarians stand for can never be forgotten while there are declared Unitarians openly claiming their rightful place among Christian Scholars and Christian Assemblies.

The changes which have taken place in the teaching of the popular churches since my youth are simply startling, and all in the direction to which the Unitarians have pointed the way.

There is no imaginable reason why most of the sermons we hear in Anglican and Methodist and Congregational pulpits should not be equally appreciated in ours : none would know the difference. It is true, the old stale platitudes and dogmatisms are still sometimes set forth, but almost always it is by those whose minds were closed against progress long ago—men who have ceased to think or keep apace with truth.

The younger ministers in nearly all the great denominations are determined to make thankful use of all the resources of modern Science and Biblical Criticism, even though it means recasting the forms of their faith. Only last month I was told by a Congre-

gational Minister how thankful and proud we Unitarians must be to see our work being done on all hands and in the churches which have held us aloof. It is true. The workings of the Divine Law are irresistible and wonderful past expression. The practical benefit comes not indeed to us or to our modest meeting-houses, with their oft-times scanty congregations; would it did! But this has been the fate of all pioneers of truth, a fate which we may be proud to share, as in line with the prophets and apostles and the noble army of martyrs. It does not trouble us that we must take a very humble place, so long as the great cause of the truth we proclaim is advanced in the minds of men. Though they follow not with us, God's blessing be upon them, as it certainly is on the truth itself!

But for ourselves, our course is clear, as it has always been. At whatever cost we can only remain loyal to the principle of Freedom which has made the adoption of the creeds of other men impossible for us, and enabled us to keep our minds open and receptive of Divine Truth as it may be borne in upon our souls by the free winds of His invisible Providence. And this spirit, which we have proudly inherited from our fathers, makes us stand firmly by the principles of the Unitarian Faith, which no fresh illumination from the great Source of Truth has ever shown to be otherwise than stable and soundly laid—principles which can and do adapt themselves to every restatement in higher form of established fact or reasonable deduction. Content with a few simple affirmations, sufficient to sustain the soul in all its experiences and keep its hold on the realm of the Eternal, we become increasingly sure of its divine origin, remain ever receptive of the inflow of divine truth from whatever quarter it may come, and take a firmer hold on the assurance of the divine destiny which awaits the soul that seeks its Maker and strives to follow His will.

Long Service Awards.

Rev. A. Whitford, Convener of Sunday School Committee, writes to draw the attention of our Sunday School teachers to the long service medal which is being presented by *The Sunday School Association*. This award is for those who have been for twenty-five years, and still are, teachers in our Schools. The twenty-five years need not be consecutive, they may be divided into two or more periods. Nor do the qualifying term of years need to have been served in one school only. Periods of service in different schools may be counted in order to qualify for the award. In cases where war service interfered with teaching these years will count towards the minimum required provided the teaching was recommenced on demobilisation. *It is to be observed that the Award applies only to those who are still teachers or officers in our schools.*

He will be very glad to hear the names of any of our teachers who are eligible for the award. If these are sent to him, together with authenticated details of the qualifying service, he will forward them to the Secretary of the Sunday School Association.

A Housing Experience in Dublin.

So much has been written about the Housing shortage that readers of this paper may be interested in a practical experiment to remedy the grave evils of overcrowded and unhealthy conditions.

Those familar with efforts in Belfast will remember the very excellent houses built by the Public Utility Society, organised by Professor Corkey, under the auspices of the Assembly's College. In Dublin several churches have built houses and in other ways helped in the housing problem, under the stimulus of a Church of Ireland clergyman, the Rev. D. H. Hall, who has given a practical lead by building groups of houses, beginning with twenty, and as the capital came in, undertaking larger schemes. These schemes are on a business footing, carried on by Public Utility Societies, paying a dividend, generally at the rate of four per cent.

Unitarians have not lagged behind in this work. To quote the "Irish Builder and Engineer," on Saturday, December 17th, 1927, the opening ceremony in connection with a number of houses erected in Dublin by the Margaret Huxley Public Utility Society was performed. The Rev. E. Savell Hicks explained that the scheme originated with the Unitarian Church, the members wishing to do something to help in the relief of the city's housing problem. Their work had been made possible by a generous donation from Miss Huxley. The scheme consists of ten houses in pairs, erected in crescent form. Each house has a garden back and front, and there is a common playground in front of the houses. They are of the parlour type containing a living room,

12 by 13 feet, a parlour, 11 by 10 feet, good scullery, entrance porch, back lobby, and food cupboard. Upstairs there are three bedrooms, 12 by 13¼ feet, 12 by 11 feet and 8 by 7½ feet. There is a bathroom, a and hot press. The housewife will be interested to know there are hanging cupboards in two bedrooms, and that the casement windows open in such a manner that the entire window can be cleaned from the inside. There is a hot water supply to the scullery and bathroom. The planning has been so arranged that practically every room in each house will get the benefit of sunshine some time in the day, and the windows are so placed that each of the two larger bedrooms can have a second bed placed out of the draught, even when one window is open. Each house has electric light throughout. In common with all other housing schemes in Dublin, State and Corporation subsidies are given. In a tribute to those who had made the scheme workable, the Rev Savell Hicks paid a compliment to the architects and contractors who had taken a personal interest in the work and thanks to whose care the original estimate had only been exceeded by £150. Mr. Hicks also made reference to their indebtedness to the Rev. D. H. Hall, who had given the society valuable help and advice and whose spendid example as a pioneer in housing work for the poor they had endeavoured to follow.

The total cost of the scheme including purchase of site, building costs, and fees, was approximately £6,800, working out at an all over cost of £680 per house. The houses will be let at a rental of a pound a week, including taxes. This will prove an economic rent, allowing a dividend of four per cent. on capital. Nine of the houses are already let.

In most cases, the houses are let to skilled artisans, whose wages render payment of the pound a week possible. These men, with families, have been living in tenements, owing to the impossibility of obtaining proper houses. Their removal will lessen the pressure on the tenement rooms, thus bringing down the rent, and leaving such tenements for less well paid workers. Thus the housing shortage is tackled, to quote Mr. Hicks, " from the top."

The Unitarian Church in Dublin deserves the most sincere congratulations on the success of the scheme, which it is hoped to extend as the rents begin to come in, thus providing capital for further building.

DORA MELLONE.

The Earth on Which We Live, How Old Is It?

A frequent subject of discussion lately both in the pulpit and press has been the Theory of Evolution. On this side of the water scientific men seem to be unanimous in accepting it as a working hypothesis, at least as near to truth as anything yet discovered. In the United States of America, it appears to meet with a good deal of opposition, teachers in some of the States being forbidden to introduce it into the lessons given to their classes. It may be that some of us, satiated with the stories of America's progressiveness and advancement retailed since our childhood's days, began to feel proud of the freedom of thought and speech enjoyed by the humbled Britisher, as we followed the course of a famous trial fresh in the memory of all of us. There may, however, be the danger that a comparatively new idea like the Theory of Evolution may gain acceptance amongst those who like to keep in line with the most recent discoveries of scientific research without its implications being fully considered and weighed. The doctrine of Evolution makes great demands on time.

Evolution Implies Many Millions of Years.

The earth must be much older than Fundamentalist Theologians so far have admitted. The question therefore, confronts us : Is there reliable evidence to show that this planet has existed for the millions on millions of years necessary to provide the spaciousness of time demanded for the working of evolution ? If so, where are we to look for such evidence, and what is its nature ? Archbishop Usher, who seems to have had a taste for exact dates, drew the conclusion from his study of Holy Scripture that the creation took place in the year 4004 B.C. As this conclusion appeared to rest on inspired evidence, few professing christians were prepared to question it, and so it was generally accepted and taught in the churches, and in religious literature. But thoughtful observers of the rocks began to doubt whether the fossils discovered in deep strata embedded in coal seams, and preserved in solid lime-stone, had not a different tale to tell. Six thousand years were altogether insufficient to cover the time demanded by the mass of sedimentary rocks piled layer on layer to the depth of many miles, and clearly laid down by processes similar to those still in operation.

And so informed opinion began to look for a more acceptable explanation.

The Evidence of the Rocks.

Lord Kelvin, who may almost be claimed as a County Down man, as his ancestors belonged to the neighbourhood of Ballynahinch, Spa, gave his great mind to the solution of the problem. Taking for granted the soundness of the Nebular Hypothesis of the earth's origin, Lord Kelvin calculated the number of years that must have elapsed since the process of cooling began. The initial heat was shown to be supplemented by additional heat arising from the mechanical shrinkage in the earth's mass that gradually took place. A long period must have elapsed before the gaseous ball became solid enough and cool enough to carry water on its surface. Taking every known fact into consideration, Lord Kelvin found that the history of the earth as a planet covered a period of forty million years. Of course the process of cooling was still in operation. A day within measurable distance was surely coming when the earth would lose its heat, and cease to be able to support life. Deadness would then possess the earth, as it is generally supposed to possess the moon to-day.

Lord Kelvin's Theory Set Aside.

But the march of scientific discovery is increasing, and no man of real scholarship will claim finality for his views. New facts are continuously forthcoming. God sends forth his light and his truth to every age, but without a certain amount of preparation, it cannot be received.

Each student of research in a laboratory is strengthening the foundation on which his successors will build. And so it happened with regard to the age of the earth. Madame Curie a name well-known in the scientific world, made the discovery of radium, a discovery of the greatest importance.

Radium is a daughter of uranium, one of the radio-active elements, and is continually giving off heat. Lord Rayleigh took up the investigation of these new elements, and found their presence in all kinds of rocks. The consequence of this fresh knowledge was so far-reaching as to be almost revolutionary from a scientific standpoint. Here was practically an inexhaustible source of energy whose presence had been entirely unknown.

The Discovery of the Radio-Active Elements.

Lord Kelvin's theory was immediately exploded. It was no longer possible to hold that the earth was gradually cooling, and fast descending into deadness. There was enough energy stored within these new elements to preserve the heat of the planet for thousands of millions of years. And not only was the future opened out and widened indefinitely, but here was a method of going back into the ages on ages through which the planet had maintained a separate existence. For of course, everything which gives forth its stored supplies of energy must waste in some degree, though the rate of wastage may be almost infinitely slow.

And so it was discovered that the parent radio-active elements, uranium and thorium passed through different stages of change in the process of parting with their energy. In the end a product remained identical with lead. It was possible to calculate from the amount of lead contained in a given rock, the quantity of uranium or thorium that had been used up in its production. The speed of disintegration of these elements is accurately known, and so became practicable an entirely new method of arriving at the age of the globe. It is claimed and the claim is a plausible one, that this method is attended with an amount of accuracy hitherto unrealized.

A New Method of Measuring the Earth's Age.

The result of calculations on these lines gives figures large enough to provide ample scope for the working of evolution. The lowest figure reached is one thousand six-hundred million years, and the highest is three thousand million years. Somewhere between these two figures the truth doubtless lies. Archbishop Usher thought he had hit on the very year of creation. Scientific men of modern days are satisfied if they find evidence sufficiently strong to point to a conclusion within a million years or so of the desired event.

Other lines of investigation, of which there are several, support the evidence of the radio-active elements. The earth is old in years, but young in reality for on account of the presence of these elements, it renews its youth periodically, and is to all intents and purposes eternal.

"SENEX."

The Women's League.

First House Branch.

Lady Campbell performed the opening ceremony of the Café Chantant and Sale organised by the members of the First House Branch of the Women's League, and held in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street. The proceeds were devoted to the League expenses, Domestic Mission, and the Women's and Children's Hospitals.

Miss Armstrong (president of the Branch) presided at the opening ceremony. She said that afternoon's effort was to raise money for worthy objects. There was little need to introduce Lady Campbell, who, in addition to being well known for herself, was the wife of an eminent surgeon, whose reputation extended all over the North of Ireland.

Lady Campbell, who, in declaring the sale open, expressed the wish that the sale would be a great success, said everyone loved children, and were always willing to help hospitals where they were treated free of charge by doctors, surgeons and nurses. They also sympathised with women when ill, and were very pleased to help hospitals where such women, not in good circumstances, could be treated without payment.

A floral bouquet was presented to Lady Campbell by Miss M'Robert, the youngest member of the League.

The value of the possibilities of the League were referred to by Miss Hutton when proposing a vote of thanks to Lady Campbell.

Mrs. Hill seconded, and the motion was passed.

As a result of this entertainment a Christmas gift of 5 Guineas was sent to each of the following :—The Domestic Mission, the Belfast Hospital for Women and Children, the Ulster Hospital for Women and Children, the Maternity Hospital, the Samaritan Hospital and the balance retained for League expenses.

On Tuesday, 10th January, a New Year's Party was held in the Central Hall and attended by representatives from all the Branches. It was made memorable by being the first occasion at which the two newly-formed Branches (Ballycarry and Clough), were represented and a specially warm greeting was given them. After tea, and the singing of the first verse of " the Old Hundredth," names were immediately started, and the order that no one was to be " out of her teens " for that evening was universally obeyed—young and old taking part in them with equal enthusiasm. Miss Edna Kennedy, in the spirit of the League, presided at the piano all the evening and Miss Johnston delighted her audience with some charming songs. During an interval, Miss Andrews, President of the District announced that the Quarterly District Meeting was to be held on 27th inst., at Mountpottinger, and requested that if any Branch had any matter to bring up, notice should be sent to her before then. Mrs. Jackson explained the general programme arranged for that evening.

Mrs. Jackson for the Domestic Mission and Mountpottinger, Mrs. Davies for Comber, Miss Crawford for Larne, Mrs. Marsden, for Ballycarry, and Miss Donan for Clough, all expressed thanks to the First House for its hospitality ; while Mrs. Slipper added her personal thanks as a member of Head quarters and stated that she hoped that in the near future Newry also would have a Branch. It was not possible to get nearly through the programme arranged as distant members had to leave early. A very lively evening was brought to a close by the whole party singing " Auld Lang Syne."

Good In All.

A dearly loved and deservedly esteemed minister of our community has announced a series of addresses on the great religions of the world, naming the course " The Good in Other Religions." To many in other churches, it comes as a surprise that such a subject is possible, that other religions should exist for any other purpose than to be torn up root and branch and destroyed in unquenchable fire. Speaking to a missionary of the C.M.S., evidently earnest and devoted, who had been on furlough and was returning to India, he said that God had given India into the hands of the British, that the native religions might be exterminated, and Christianity established there. Do you know anything of the " Brahmo-Somaj."? I asked. " Oh, they are the same as the Unitarians." His tone implied that the Brahmo-Somaj would have to go with the rest. Yet that missionary from his conversation and manner was undoubtedly a gentleman, a thoroughly good man. He was loyal to the faith in which he had been brought up. One of the type, Robert Burns had in mind, " It never cam' into their heids to doot." Those who have known India very closely for many years, tell us that in the past the attitude of missionaries towards the native religions

roused a hatred against Christianity, more bitter than that of any one native religion to another.

The Principal of a theological college in India, was the author of an article some years ago in "The Modern Churchman," I think it was, on "The Failure of Missions in India." The reason he gave for the failure was, that missionaries had tried to make the natives Jews, before they made them Christians, that they dragged them through the Old Testament, to prove that Jesus was the fulfilment of Messianic prophecy. But what do Hindus care about any Jewish Messiah? The Jews are as alien to them as the English. The better method would have been to have met the Hindus on the ground of their own scriptures, where the possibility of the Incarnation in perfect man, that Incarnation showing itself in lesser measure as the scale from Avatara, and Avesha is descended until that of the prophet the teacher is reached. That is to say in their own teachings they have already anticipated the Christ, He is theirs already. What the Principal of the College said in his article has been confirmed by a Baptist Missionary, who in his own way is orthodox enough, in a book "The Christ of the Hindu Road," which has just appeared.

Gandhi has realised the Christ in that way, and others whose names as leaders of parties, sometimes in opposite camps politically, have responded to Christ as a fulfilment of Hindu ideals. "I look upon Christ," said a Brahman in one of our pulpits, "As the greatest of all Hindus, for two reasons: He fasted forty days and said I and my Father are One," Then he explained Yoga or Meditation, but, that alone would require a separate article.

Such a course, as is outlined in the series of sermons advertised, has an import greater than that of a mere passing interest, even if the injunction of Professor Max Muller were remembered, "He who only knows his own religion, knows none." Within the Commonwealth of Nations known as the British Empire, exists every great religion of the Aryan stock. The bond of mutual love and understanding is far stronger than armies and navies to hold that Commonwealth together, "The Good in All," is an Imperial question, the Divine Wisdom which shines through all. No one claims that the good is not obscured, the light is not dimmed. Alas, it is, ignorance and superstition, humanity's twin foes are to be got rid of, not by rousing fierce fanatical fires of religious hatred; but by the sweet wholesome influences of the Divine Wisdom whose breath sweeps away the dust of illusions, the deadly miasmas that poison life. Like the dawn from behind the mountains, like the invigorating breath of the morning air comes the magnetism of Him who satisfies the hearts of men, in every truth, the Supreme Teacher of the World, whose compassionate glance perceives "the good in all," and brings His sheep from many folds, into one great fold—the World Religion.

ULLIN.

Is Immortality Delusion.

By Rev. S. P. Whitehouse.

"There is a feeling abroad that science has proved that immortality is a delusion. Nothing could be farther from the truth," said the Rev. Sydney P. Whitehouse, at the evening service in All Saints' Church, Belfast, on a Sunday evening lately.

"In so far as science had any evidence to offer on the subject, it was in favour of some kind of existence after the change they called death. Whatever extreme position science might have taken up in the past, they should remember that the pathway of science was strewn with discarded theories just as the pathway of theology was littered with worn-out creeds and dogmas, modern science spoke in favour of rather than against the idea of immortality.

Science could not even tell them what life was much less could it tell them what death was.

When the reason had marshalled all the evidence that could be collected to support immortality it was still unable to present a completely convincing case. The evidence was so inconclusive that at most one could only form a tentative opinion, based on the balance of probability.

Why was it that man had always believed in a life beyond the grave; why had he deliberately refused to accept the evidence of his senses which told him as plain as anything could tell him, that death was the end? The answer was that the heart had its reasons for believing in immortality, reasons of which the reason knew nothing. It might be possible to convince the reason that immortality was a delusion, it never had been possible, and it never would be possible to convince the heart that immortality is a delusion."

Psychology and Religion.

Fierce Controversy Pending.

Preaching in All Souls' Chruch, Belfast, recently, the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, said: "There is impending at the present time a controversy which promises to be fiercer than that of a generation ago between biology and religion, namely, the controversy between religion and psychology, especially that branch of psychology known as the new psychology. As was the case a generation ago, there are foolish people who are saying that if the new science is true then religion must be false. Psychology will certainly revolutionise our ideas of religion, but it will not destroy religion, it will only destroy superstition.

"The result of the present controversy will be almost identical with that of the controversy with biology a generation ago. That is to say, it will drastically change our views about religion and about God, but it will not affect our ultimate belief in God. The new psychology will search very deeply into the fundamentals of religion, and out of the searching criticism will come something more firmly established than the beliefs we held before. It will tell us what biology told us and is still telling us—that God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.

"It is not the slightest use the narrow theologian turning his back on the searching questions raised by the psychologist. He may turn his back on them, but when he looks over his shoulder, as he must sometimes do, he will still find them behind him, asking him to give a reason for the faith that is in him. If he refuses to answer, only one conclusion can be drawn—his faith must be built on the sand and not on the rocks. It is nonsense to assume that to examine the workings of the human mind is to eliminate the divine. If we really believe that God is in some mysterious way connected with our lives. then it cannot be wrong to study life and all connected with it.

The psychologist is just as sincere and just as truthful as the theologian when he says that conversion is a divine act. In spite of what is said to the contrary, psychology is not the enemy of religion. It is the enemy of superstition. Psychology worships at the shrine of truth. Can any religion, including the Christian religion, do more than this? Psychology enables us to see, if only in a glass darkly, what was formerly blurred and indistinct owing to the mists of human ignorance."

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Is the Church a Failure.

Rev. A. H. M'Neile, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity in Trinity College, Dublin, was the special preacher on Sunday at both services in Christ Church, Londonderry.

"To-day," he said, "the vast bulk of humanity was almost devoid of real religion of any kind or description."

The supposition of large classes of the community, he continued, that the Church's primary function was to labour for the supplying of their bodily needs was one of the outstanding difficulties. He asked them never to say with contempt, bitterness, or despair that the Church was a failure. What was wanted was that each should do his part as a member of the Church to make it, as far as they were concerned, a brilliant success.

Obituary.

The Passing of Miss Isabella Campbell.

With no conventional words of mourning but, touched with that Divine Peace into whose fulness she has now entered, we record the passing of Miss Isabella Campbell. After a long and painful illness, borne with a spirit of patience and courage that compelled the reverence of all who witnessed it, she passed away peacefully at her residence, 36 Mount Charles, Belfast, on 24th December. All Souls' can ill afford to lose such a loyal and devoted member. Her work in connection with the Church and all its activities, and particularly her work in the Sunday School where she taught for so many years, will long be remembered. Two and a half years ago, illness brought to a close her active participation in Church work, but her interest in the Church never flagged. On the contrary it became more intense, the one regret being that she could no longer spend herself in the service of others. However the end of her active life did not mark the end of her ministry. Her gracious presence was an inspiration to all who were privileged to enjoy it. Right up to the end, personal contact with her never failed to raise one to higher spiritual levels. Unspeakable suffering served but to make a beautiful nature still more refined and noble. During the long illness, the wonderful smile of greeting never failed and even after the frail body had liberated the spirit, the smile still lingered. We have suffered a great loss, but there remains the fragrant memory of a truly Christian lady who laboured unceasingly for others and who has now entered the calm and peace of the Eternal Haven where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

* *

Mr. John Hamill, Ballymoney.

After an illness of some weeks Mr. John Hamill, of Dunoverney, Ballymoney, died on Tuesday, the 29th of November, at the age of 75. Mr. Hamill, who was a member of the one of the oldest families in the Route district, had been the Treasurer of the Remonstrant Presbyterian Congregation and a ruling elder for many years, and his interest in our congregations and all that pertained to them was keen and never-failing He was a perfect encyclopædia of local history. Gentle, courteous, kindly and upright, he was one of the best known and most capable farmers in North Antrim, and his loss will be more keenly felt than easy to make good. So long as he was able to get about, he was never absent from his accustomed place on Sunday. He leaves behind him a fragrant memory of strength of character and loyalty to the cause he had at heart. He leaves a widow and a son. The funeral took place on Thursday, the 1st of December, to Ballymoney New Cemetery. The service at the house and the graveside was conducted by the Rev. Felix Holt, assisted by the Rev. Alfred Turner, of Templepatrick.

* *

Miss Margaret Long, Comber.

By the death of Miss Margaret Long, which occurred on Sunday, January 1st, the Comber Unitarian Church has lost its oldest member. Miss Long had reached the ripe old age of 92 years, and though she had been confined to her house for some years past, she retained her faculties unimpaired to the last. She was a staunch and loyal Unitarian and was deeply interested in the welfare of our Church. She possessed a charitable and kindly disposition and was greatly respected by all who knew her. Her breadth of view and keen interest in

current affairs made conversation with her a delightful and helpful experience. We tender to her relatives who mourn her loss our sincere sympathy. The church in Comber deeply regret the passing of such an old and faithful friend. Her remains were laid to rest in the burying-ground of the Unitarian Church, her minister, the Rev. J. G. Davies, conducted the service in the house and at the grave side.

* *

Mr. John Ledlie, Ballyhemlin.

Mr. John Ledlie of the Ballyhemlin Congregation passed away on December 19th, 1927, He was a comparatively young man, a blacksmith to his trade, and very well known in the locality as a hard-wroking, skilful craftsman. For several years however he had suffered severely in health. He had been an officer in the "Lightship" Masonic Lodge, Ballywalter, which was represented at the funeral, which took place on Wednesday, December 21st, in very stormy weather, at the grave-yard, Ballyhalbert, Co. Down.

* *

Mr. John Vinycomb, M.R.I.A.

Reference was made at the morning Service, at the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church, Holywood, on Sunday, January 29th, to the passing in his 95th year, of Mr. John Vinycomb, M.R.I.A., a former member of the congregation.

Mr. Vinycomb came to Belfast from Newcastle-on-Tyne, at the age of 25, as long ago as 1855. He became head of the art staff of the once famous publishing house of Marcus Ward & Co. When the firm came to an end in 1899, Mr. Vinycomb devoted his great energy and extraordinary skill of eye and hand to the work in which he excelled, heraldic designs, the making of bookplates and illuminated writing. "From the end of the last century (says 'Old Fogey' in the 'Northern Whig') almost every important local public presentation scroll was executed by John Vinycomb. These included some thirty certificates of Freedom given to honorary burgesses of the city of Belfast, and also addresses from the citizens and public bodies to King Edward, King George and other royalties. Many of these are gems of the illuminator's art." Mr. Vinycomb was one of the founders and president of the Ulster Art Society, a president of the Ulster Arts Club and of the Natural History and Philosophical Society and Naturalists Field Club, a Vice-President of the Royal Society of Antiquaries in Ireland, a member of the Royal Irish Academy and a Vice-President of the ex Libris Society of London, where he spent his latter years.

He was a man of amazing vitality and marked individuality with a wonderful eye, and a wonderfully skilful hand. Even after he had passed the nineties, his eye had not waxed dim nor his hand lost its cunning. He was a happy man, happy because he loved his work and could do it excellently, well and happy in his many friendships and happy in his family. Three of his daughters live in Holywood—Mrs. Charles Greenfield, Mrs. R. Grainger, and Mrs. W. Grainger. We offer to them our sincere sympathy in their bereavement and rejoice with them in a long life richly lived and good work finely done.

Reports.

Belfast Domestic Mission.—The Stanhope Street Branch of the Women's League were entertained to Tea at the Mission on Monday afternoon, December 19th, by the ladies of the All Souls' Sewing Circle, a vote of thanks to the donors of the tea was moved by Mrs. Lindsay and seconded by Mrs. Carruthers, and passed with acclamation. A programme of music was rendered by Mesdames Allen, Ervine, Jackson, Hay and the Misses Pauline Clarke, Nellie Hay and Jean Newman. Carols were sung and the meeting closed with the usual devotions. Christmas parcels were distributed and the Secretary wishes to thank all those ladies of the Needlework Guild who made this distribution possible.

*

Banbridge.—The Annual New Year's Party was held on Friday night, 13th January, in the Dunbar Memorial School. The School was packed. At first the lighting was exceptionally poor but this was early and partly remedied by the addition of two dozen candles, and an acetylene lamp—the latter being a happy thought of the Chairman's. All present then proceeded to thoroughly enjoy themselves. The tea, distributed by the ladies and the Choristers, was of the usual good quality and was done full justice to. Then followed a prize distribution, to the Sunday School Scholars who had merited the same. These book prizes seemed to be of even better value than former years—though they have always been valuable. The minister, in in-

troducing Miss M'Caw, who kindly presented these prizes, referred to the good attendance of a large percentage of the scholars, and announced a new rule which will govern the earning of a prize next year. We were then presented with a new feature at these gatherings. Two charades acted by the boys (members of the newly formed club). There is much promising material in these lads, who acted marvellously well, and obviously enjoyed it, as much as the audience did. We note however that they called in the assistance of girls for two of their scenes. The Maypole scene—where the girls were required would certainly have been encored had it been possible to repeat. We wish the club a great success in this year now entered, and confidently believe our wish will be gratified. Though Father Christmas did not pay us a visit in person, he sent a goodly hamper of "Surprises" of which practically every one present, grown-ups as well as the children, and visitors too, participated. Everybody voted it a great night, and with the rendering of God Save the King, and the Benediction pronounced, we dispersed to our various homes—some four or five miles distant, just before eleven o'clock.

* *

Ballee.—Owing to sickness the usual programme in connection with the Sunday School Christmas Entertainment was unfortunately interfered with this time, but a modern "Father Christmas," with kindly thought, travelled by motor car and distributed the usual good things at each home, so as to avoid entire disappointment to the young folk. At the New Year useful gift books were again given to the Sunday School children by the minister, and seasonable publications to the members of the Congregation, a continued kindness much appreciated. Respectful sympathy is tendered to our highly esteemed fellow-worshipper, Mr. John Gracey, The Grange, in his trying illness and the universal wish expressed that our friend may be duly restored to health.

* *

Bangor.—The Opening Ceremony of the Bangor Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church (Unitarian), took place at their New Hall, at 65 Main Street, Bangor, on December 4th. The service was conducted by the Rev. A. L. Agnew, from York Street, Belfast, who spoke on Idealism; there was an attendance of over 100 including a good representation from York Street. A solo was sympathetically sung by Miss Beattie, and after the Service, Tea was served by the Ladies of the Congregation. A most successful Concert in aid of the above Church funds was organised by Mr. and Mrs. Lennox Andrews, on December 16th, in the Central Hall, Belfast. Mr. Sheppard of Mountpottinger Unitarian Choir took charge of the programme. The concert was highly enjoyed and was unanimously praised as being of a high class order. Tea was generously provided to those who took part and to those of the audience who came from a distance. Lord Justice Andrews presided, and thanked the Artistes. Rev. Whitford replied.

* *

Holywood.—The Annual gathering of the Sunday School Scholars for their prize distribution, Christmas Tree and Entertainment was held on Friday evening, January 6th. The proceedings began with tea, to which about 60 children sat down. Afterwards the Schoolroom was crowded with parents and friends, and a liberal programme was opened by a fairy sketch called "The Wishing Tree." Mrs. F. A. Robinson had charge of this performance, but unforttunately she was kept in England owing to sickness in her family. Her presence and help were greatly missed throughout the night. Willing helpers, however, stepped into the breach and "carried on" for her—Mrs. Armstrong and the Misses S. and E. Meneely and N. and M. Shannon. At the distribution of the prizes, the Minister (Rev. E. Lockett), introduced Lady Campbell who had kindly consented to give away the awards. He reported that there were over 70 scholars on the rolls and the attendance had on the whole been better than in the previous year. On several Sundays the figures had been higher than for some years, but these fluctuated more than they ought. He thanked the teachers for their services and especially named the faithful work of Mr. W. J. Harvey at the morning school, and Mrs. Robinson at the evening school. Lady Campbell graciously distributed the prizes and said a few kindly and helpful words to the Scholars and parents. She announced amidst applause, that she would offer two Special Prizes for next year, one to the best girl and the other to the best boy. Four of the scholars during the year attended regularly every time the school was opened. Another popular item in the programme was a humorous sketch, arranged by Mr. W. J. Harvey, called "Broadcasting," in which there was plenty of rough and tumble fun.

The characters were taken by Messrs. W. J. Harvey and A. K. Harvey, James Meneely Jim Shannon and Miss Nan Shannon. During the evening, songs were sung by Mr. A. K. Harvey and recitations given by Miss Peggy Robin. The proceedings closed with the stripping of a fine Christmas tree (the gift of Sir Robert Kennedy), Mr. G. A. Robinson impersonating Father Christmas.

* *

Mountpottinger.—On Sunday, December 18th the Pulpit was occupied by Rev. J. Barron who also presided at the rendering in the afternoon of a Cantata entitled "Star of the East," in connection with which he gave a short but interesting address. A congregation of goodly dimensions listened to an excellent rendering which reflected great credit on the training by our Organist Mr. H. Shepherd, who acted as Conductor. The soloists were Miss A. Beattie, Miss M. Gribbon, Mr. H. Childs and Mr. J. Johnston, all of whom acquitted themselves creditably. To Mr. Childs who took up his part at extremely short notice we extend a special word of thanks. Mr. S. White was at the Piano and proved as usual efficient. The musical portion of the Work was undertaken by a String Orchestra which did its work exceedingly well. At the conclusion tea was provided for those of the Choir and Musicians who cared to avail themselves the opportunity; the catering being carried out by members of the Women's League. At the evening service Christmas Carols were a feature of the musical side of the Service. On Christmas Day owing to the holidays there was service in the morning only, this being conducted by Mr. J. M'Cleery. On New Year's Day that wonderful veteran of our Church, Rev. A. Gordon, M.A., was the preacher, and gave two excellent sermons. On January 8th, we were favoured with a visit from Mr. R. W. Davidson, of Manchester College, Oxford, whose addresses proved acceptable to good congregations. January 15th, saw Mr. J. M'Cleery officiating in the morning on behalf of Rev. J. Glynn Davies who was however able to conduct the Evening Service.

Church Chaos,

Dr. Barnes Fears Lack of Dsicipline.

The fear that chaos is much more likely to follow if the Prayer Book Measure be comes law than if it should be rejected was expressed on December 11th, by the Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Barnes) in addressing the Diocesan Conference.

"The contentious rubrics are loosely drafted," he said. "Dangerous and unprecedented powers are given to the bishops collectively to make subordinate rubics, which will have the force of law, consequently no individual bishop can know where he stands.

"Naturally, as an administrative officer of the Church, I will try to be loyal to my duties in the future as in the past, but in my deliberate judgment, in consequence of the uncertainity which will exist, it will be impossible (I use the common phrase) to restore discipline.

"If the Measures be rejected all but the Reservation and Holy Communion, changes could easily be carried, then, within about 30 years the Church could, as I believe, agree to restate its theology so as to be in harmony with modern knowledge.

"By passing the Measure, Parliament will, in my judgment, give such an implicit approval to erroneous doctrines as will perpetuate discord within the Church and leave us unprepared to profit by the next religious revival in England."

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